# Men and Books

## JACQUES BOURGEOIS. CHIRURGIEN. 1621—1701

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It is supposed that Jacques Bourgeois was brought to Nova Scotia by D'Aulnay to attend to the medical and surgical needs of his colonists. With Bourgeois came his wife, Jeanne Trahan, the marriage having taken place but a short time before his arrival in Nova Scotia. It is thought that the year 1640 was for him a notable one, it being not only the year of his marriage, but the year in which he first set foot in the young colony in which he played so prominent a part.

If Rameau St. Père is correct in his conclusions, he was one of a party of colonists, many of whom were closely connected by marriage; another prominent member of the little coterie was Germain Doucette de la Verdure, D'Aulnay's man of affairs, who after D'Aulnay's death became the protector of his children and his estate.

Soon after his arrival in Port Royal, Bourgeois was able to obtain an interest in some land (L'Ile Aux Cochins) concerning which there was at a later date some litigation, though in the interval Bourgeois' holdings had been at least partially conveyed to another colonist.

After D'Aulnay's death in 1650, the colony at Port Royal fell upon troublous times. In 1654, when Sedgewick was able to wrest the control of the little fort from Doucette, Bourgeois was delivered to Sedgewick as a hostage for the carrying out of the capitulatory agreement. After the terms of the convention had been met, and during the period of relative quiet which followed Jacques Bourgeois not only increased his holdings of land, but is said to have carried on considerable trading with the Indians and with the English colonists to the south, in vessels the construction of which he had himself overseen. In 1671 he was one of the most prominent men in Port Royal. His family then consisted of his wife and ten children, and his agricultural holdings were among the most considerable of the colony. In addition to the home establishment under the protection of Port Royal he was about that time engaged in promoting the foundation of a commercial and farming enterprise, which later became Beaubassin, one of the largest offshoots from the parent colony. In the development of this settlement he was very deeply interested, relinquishing for it to his sons his lands at Port Royal, and leading to it a number of Acadians, both relatives and friends who were willing to undertake with him the task of pioneering in a hitherto unsettled district.

The task involved difficulties greater than those usually met in such attempts. La Valliere, pressing his claims of possession of the land as within the limits of his seigneury, resented his presence, and the absence of protection made the new settlement vulnerable to attack from the English colonists; but in spite of all obstacles the settlement made rapid progress. It was of this period of Bourgeois' life that Rameau thus writes,—"This Jacob Bourgeois, brought by D'Aulnay as surgeon to his forces, who takes one holding, then two, then three, who clears and cultivates them; then sells them and buys them back; who builds vessels and opens up a trade with the Puritans of Boston, becomes to us a striking personage. He has character; he steers his course with prudence and does not allow himself to be made tipsy by success, and acts in all things with that moderation which conduces to success and merits it."

"He installs his sons in the businesses he has founded, and in his old days goes to found at the head of the Bay of Fundy, at Chignecto the first colony of Acadians. There, although aged seventy-five years, he bears in 1696 the shock of an invasion of English pirates; he can not rely on the strength of his enfeebled arm to protect himself and his friends, but his brain has retained its clearness and its firmness. He visits in his little boat the enemy flotilla; he recognises among these unwelcome visitors persons with whom he had business dealings in former days; he had then been of service to them, and had letters to show the value of that service. These letters he shows; the old man astonishes them; his energy dominates them, and earns a recognition and a welcome. He entertains in his home his old associates, and he and his are thus saved from spoliation. Was this, then, an ordinary man?"

He died about the year 1701, supposedly at Beaubassin. His family had in it those apparently capable of carrying on the work he had

undertaken, and members of it had places of more than minor prominence in the rapidly growing settlements. But the blight of the expulsion in 1755 involved them in its tragedies, so that a few years thereafter his descendants were scattered from Quebec to Louisiana, from France to the Cayennes. Gaudet has attempted to construct from the material available a genealogical tree of the descendants of Nova Scotia's first permanent surgeon, and has followed in his efforts the different branches of the family to the widely separated localities where their fortunes has scattered them. A few of them escaped the English dragnet; others succeeded in working their way back to the lands of their fathers, and many French Acadians, especially those living in New Brunswick, can today trace their origin back to D'Aulnay's surgeon.

REFERENCES

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## THE CENTENARY OF CHARCOT

There are still living many who were pupils of Jean Martin Charcot, but to too many of us he is little more than the name associated with "Charcot's joint disease." The occasion, however, has now come for recalling his memory, in that the hundredth anniversary of his birth (November, 1825) has recently been celebrated in Paris, and celebrated with a ceremony and depth of respect which we do not accord to even our greatest medical men.* British representatives in attendance at this commemoration have described it as "perhaps the most wonderful tribute ever paid to any medical man, and paid to him, not as a scientist, nor as a discoverer, but just as a physician whose work and personality had made a deep and permanent impression on the science and art to which he had devoted his talents and his life." One of the events was attended by the President of the Republic, a performance of national homage to which it would be difficult to find a corresponding echo in our own countries.

The comment has been made that Charcot was more of a co-ordinator and man of method than a true inventive genius. That is apparent on looking over his writings. He has left nothing which will stand out in history as does the monumental work of Harvey, or Jenner, or Pasteur. Rather did he labour in wide fields, bringing their contents into perspective by virtue of that quality of orderliness which was so well developed in him, amongst those other qualities which taken together made him that not altogether easily definable combination called a great teacher. There was also his lucidity of expression. Sir David Ferrier once remarked to him that he always admired the clearness of writing of French authors, to which Charcot replied that this was because the French language did not allow anyone to be obscure. The modesty of this self-depreciation, however, could deceive no one as to Charcot's innate power of clear thinking, without which no language could have saved him quite from being obscure.

His appearance was striking: it was a pardonable vanity—and he shared it with other great men—that he liked to be reminded of his resemblance to Napoleon. But his dignity of manner and coldly impartial air did not prevent him from exercising an extraordinary power over his patients. He had the gift of stimulating younger minds, and this was the secret of his building up a school of neurology such as had not been seen before in the profession. So widely known did his teaching become, that his neurological clinics and lectures at La Salpêtrière became the Mecca of medical men the world over. His demonstrations were attended at one time or another by nearly all the leaders of contemporary medical thought, and, as has been said, "the fledgling just escaped from the academic nest might sign his name in the visitors' book between those of Rudolf Virchow and Grainger Stewart."[1]

For his crowded public clinics the dramatic element in his many-sided personality soon evolved methods to heighten the effects of his teaching. He would demonstrate cases on the stage of a miniature theatre, with all the accessories of footlight and scenic lighting, and while the patient stood in the flood of light Charcot would lecture from the side, being careful to speak slowly and distinctly for the sake of his many foreign visitors. And after the patient was dismissed he would throw a picture of the particular lesion on to the screen at the back of the stage.

One sees this dramatic vein in more than one of the incidentals of his life, and not least in the scene of his labours, the vast institution of La Salpêtrière, now the most important neurological centre in Paris as well as an almshouse with

*Vide Osler's comment, in his memorial notice of Charcot (*Bull. Johns Hopkins Hosp.* Sept. 1893.)